

THE COMPANION,

AND WEEKLY MISCELLANY.

BY EDWARD EASY, ESQ.

—“A safe COMPANION, and an EASY Friend.”—Pope.

VOL. I.

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THE PRICE OF THIS PAPER IS THREE DOLLARS PER ANNUM, PAYABLE HALF-YEARLY IN ADVANCE...NO PAPER WILL BE SENT OUT OF THE CITY, WITHOUT PREVIOUS PAYMENT, OR SURETY IN TOWN.

“Biography is, of the various kinds of narrative writing, that which is most eagerly read, and most easily applied to the purposes of life.”

JOHNSON.

THE following sketch of the life and character of EDMUND BURKE, is with pleasure laid before my readers, as a happy specimen of the talents and industry of a young friend and correspondent. The style is at once a proof of the application and taste of the writer: chaste, clear, and perspicuous; totally free from the common fault of young men; who appear studious to make up for paucity of matter and indistinctness of meaning, by turgid language, and pompous phraseology.

The contemplation of those great and exalted characters, whose efforts in the cabinet, the field, or the turbulent popular assembly, give direction to the movements of the soul, and determine the destinies of empires, affords the most instructive lessons, and tends to cherish every generous and noble sentiment. In their talents, their foibles, their whims, and their caprices, are to be seen the springs that put in action the vast engines of government; the causes that agitate and give motion to the political concerns of the world. While in historick detail is displayed the grand succession of events, we must seek in the more sociable converse of the biographer, for the secret movements that gave them birth, and that minute intelligence which enables the political investigator to trace the steps that lead to the advancement and decline of nations. The lives of the illustrious are not less interesting, when we view them as exhibiting the fairest models of human perfection; on the contemplation of which the soul awakens to an ardent enthusiasm, to emulate their greatness, and rival their fame. The cold dictates of the moralist, and the fine woven texture of metaphysical de-

claimers, however lofty their pretensions, afford no powerful incentives to engage in the career of glory, and soar above the gross attractions that captivate the vulgar: example is superiour to precept; the simple narration of a great man's life more strenuously aids the cause of heroism and of virtue, than all the florid lectures of the schools.

Of Greek and Roman grandeur we have had enough. It is now time to contemplate the illustrious of our own days, and vindicate the character of modern times against the declamations of those, who seek for dignity and excellence only in æras of antiquity. Happily, we are able to select from the numerous personages who adorn and do honour to the present age, a man, on whose private and publick worth panegyrick may exhaust itself without overrating his virtues, or painting too highly his intellectual endowments. The name of Edmund Burke stands in the foremost rank of modern worthies. Amidst a constellation of great men who flourished his contemporaries, the respect and admiration of Britons were in a peculiar degree exerted towards him, as a distinguished ornament of their nation, the firm supporter of her rights, and one of the chief ministers to her glory. Foreign approbation has sealed this honourable tribute to his worth;—and while virtue and patriotism shall find an advocate, while mankind shall admire vigour of genius and splendour of talents, the name of BURKE will survive, to impress posterity with favourable sentiments of his age and country. Chance, that imperceptible agent, which so often thwarts our honest efforts, and baffles the plans of wisdom and experience, not unfrequently compensates for the evils it produces, by presenting opportunities for the display of genius, and calling forth powers, that, in the ordinary state of things, would otherwise have lain useless and unawakened. It was chance that led the great Corneille to the path that conducted him up the slippery steep of fame to immortality: The poetick talents of Cowley were dormant, until he casually met with Spencer's “Fair

Queen;" and the sublime genius of Newton was first roused from a state of lethargick torpor, by an accident of the most trivial nature. It is to chance also that we stand indebted for the great effects that have resulted from the cultivated powers of Burke, as directed to the advancement of sound political doctrine, and rational philosophy. It is well known, that after becoming a proficient in academick learning, he offered himself a candidate for the vacant chair of Professor of Logick in the University of Glasgow: his application came too late; and that fortuitous event, perhaps, led to the security of the British empire.

The family of Burke has been held in estimation among the ancient Irish; and the honour of the name is not less vindicated in modern times, by the refinements of cultivated excellence, than in feudal ages by the superiority of savage prowess. It was the good fortune of their great modern representative to have possessed a parent, whose liberal mind knew how to estimate the value of education, and whose easy circumstances enabled him to realize his wishes. Early in life, he introduced him into the college of Dublin; but the acquirements of Burke afforded an unpromising presage of his future greatness. His fellows far outstripped him in the collegiate exercises, while he was treasuring up a store of information, though less showy, yet of equal value: it was here he laid the groundwork of a dignified philosophy, and acquired the elements of various learning. The pursuits of Burke, between the close of his college life, and the commencement of his literary career, afford no interesting matter for reflection, except his disappointment in obtaining a professorship at Glasgow; an event that led to the most important effects. It was this disappointment that determined him to shape his course to the metropolis of the British Empire, that vast scene, which, both to the virtuous and the profligate, holds out every allurements, and where enterprize and steady exertion seldom fail to obtain their object.

His essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, which he published here, powerfully attracted the attention of the literati, and at their head, the great Johnson, whose penetrating mind saw at once the whole merit of its author, and whose influential opinion soon exalted him to a high pitch of eminence and celebrity. It was not, however, the destiny of Burke to move merely in a literary sphere; his active mind sought for a more various field, where he might unfold every great endowment he possessed—and he succeeded.

Amidst the turbulence of British liberty, fostered by the freedom of enquiry, the able vindicator or the acrimonious

censurer of publick acts, is not slow in arresting the notice of every individual in the kingdom. The pen of Burke, exercised on the merits of administration, introduced him to its members, and opened the way to those future political efforts that were to charm and enlighten the world. The parliament of Great Britain saw in him one of its most splendid and dazzling ornaments. Possessed of an extent of learning and information that qualified him to decide with promptness on every subject; of a judgment, sound, vigorous, and discriminating; of an extraordinary depth of political sagacity; of a fancy ever on the watch to seize similitudes, and enliven the tedious dulness of debate by sparkling allusion and witty replique;—these qualities, added to a clear and quick perception, and a rapid, magnificent elocution, contributed to the formation of one of the greatest orators and statesmen that England had ever beheld. Living in a period of great political agitation, and contemporary with individuals whose superiour talents called forth the utmost efforts of his genius, Burke cultivated with assiduity the study of eloquence, that arduous but certain road to high and honourable fame. Application joined to a great mind is adequate to any thing. The exertions of Burke astonished and confounded, while he displayed at every point in the circle of debate, the profoundest knowledge, set off with the most sublime and argumentative powers of oratory. Administration never thought themselves secure when he was in opposition; and when he sat with them, the weight of his opinion and the persuasiveness of his tongue gave popularity to many of their exceptionable measures. The speeches pronounced by him at the commencement of the American War are a monument of his penetrating sagacity, and the goodness of his heart: he reasoned like a philosopher, spoke like a prophet, and felt like a man. He exhibited in most glowing colors the impolitical measures of government, and vindicated the American character with all the warmth of a man who respected justice, and abhorred oppression. He foretold every disastrous event that would follow a rupture with the colonies—the coalition of Europe in their favour, and the final dismemberment of the British empire. But powerful and irresistible as were his arguments, and though seconded by the opinion of the illustrious Chatham, the mischievous policy was adopted, the consequence of which was, the full accomplishment of the predictions of Burke. In every interesting period of parliamentary history, this great political comet shone with a resplendent lustre. The applauses of his friends were loud and incessant, while his enemies stood confounded and abashed.

The monstrous scenes that followed the frenzy of revolutionized France, awakened the sensations of every nation. While some were disposed to consider them as necessary evils, productive in the end of publick good, they appeared in their full deformity to the mind of Burke, who saw in them the baleful effects of a detestable spirit of licentiousness and depravity, that would agitate and convulse Europe, and extend their pernicious influence to the most remote corners of the world. He warned the universe to beware of the projects of those hideous fiends who were already desolating a delightful country, and to Great Britain recommended the immediate application of salutary measures, to counteract those noxious exhalations that were issuing from the neighbouring shores. Amidst the rage of popular fury, and the bickerings of unprincipled jacobins, his firm and steady sentiments continued to gain strength, until at length their justness has produced complete conviction: This is a resplendent æra in the history of Burke: his unexampled penetration and foresight received their full reward, and his patriotick ardour led to the most grateful admiration of Britons: in fact, his oratory was considered as surpassed by his literary efforts; the *Reflections on the French Revolution* were read in every quarter of Europe; and, viewed as a master-piece of political composition, rendered its author as eminent in the department of publick law, as his philosophical essay had in the walk of rational criticism.

It is unfortunate, that most great men are such, only when viewed at a distance; approach them, and you behold monstrous disproportion, and total want of symmetry. Not so with Burke—his private character was as distinguished as his publick worth. The members of his family were objects of his most assiduous care and attention: he discharged the duties of a parent and a husband in a manner truly exemplary. In the circle of his friends no man acquitted himself with greater honour;—with astonishing versatility, he adapted himself to every society; nor did he ever lose sight of those minutiae in ceremony, which tend so much to alleviate the embarrassments that arise in inferiours, from the presence of more exalted worth. The character of Burke, in fine, was of the most amiable cast. His political talents did honour to the legislative assembly of the British empire. The schools have been instructed by his literary labours—in him, taste, judgment, and imagination contended for superiority with equal success—his social and domestick virtues are an example for the imitation of future worthies; and his suffrage for christianity, and the attention he paid to the injunctions of religion, outweigh whole columns of scoffing

infidelity, and put to shame the sneers of laughing levity. He had his failings—prejudice sometimes warped his judgment, and his irritability was somewhat too sensible; but these foibles were lost in the blaze of his virtues;—in admiring the splendour of the sun, who stops to tell of spots that dim his surface.

COSMO.

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*Mr. Easy,*

Looking over the *Companion* the other day, my eye rested on the page containing the grievances of *Flavia*; my own sad case induces me to point out the fatal source from whence we both draw our discontent; we have both provided for ourselves a cheerless uninteresting old age, by grasping at universal admiration in our youth.

So heartily sick am I of solitude, that I rejoice to have a companion even in misfortune; this splenetick humour is one of the blessed effects of a single life, and I cannot help feeling a selfish pleasure at knowing I am not the only one who has dashed happiness away by trifling too long with it: there is but this difference between *Flavia* and myself;—she is a deserted *maiden*, I, a forlorn *old bachelor*.

O Vanity, Vanity! what shall I liken thee unto!—art thou like the towering eagle? No; for he soars with majesty and descends with grace; whereas thou climbest by a step-ladder over the heads of thy betters, nor thinkest of descending till hurled from the eminence against thy will. Thou art more like a beautiful but ungovernable horse; thy groom is *Flattery*, who is ever ready to assist the deluded mortal to mount; he is scarcely seated when thou art off. *Pegasus* is but a pacing pony when compared with thee; he would kick, snort, and tremble, at the tremendous heights to which thy arrogance aspires; it is impossible to say where thy course would stop, for thy rider would never check thee, but thy journey is ended before thyself or rider art aware. *Disappointment*, impertinently crosses the road; thou wilt combat with her for some time, using all thy skill and agility to leap over her; she at length summons to her assistance a wrinkled withered hag, whose name is *Age*. *Disgust* is close at her heels. Alas, poor *Vanity* dare not encounter such formidable foes; but treacherously contrives to throw the luckless equestrian in the midst of this relentless trio, decamping in search of another victim. I happened to be one of the foolish jockeys his artful groom provided; *Flattery* extolled the grace and elegance of my person, and mounted me almost without my knowledge; I rode on at a merry rate for a long time; sometimes I would meet with interruptions, but the assiduous groom was ever near;



should my bridle, saddle, or stirrup, be out of order, *Flattery* would soon set all to rights again, and the momentary check would but add fresh vigour to the mettlesome steed, and he would dart forward with the swiftness of an arrow. Oh! fatal delusion, to what hast thou brought me! I am, as I before observed, a forlorn *old bachelor*. I frequently sit before my fire, with a foot resting on either andiron (for, alas! I incommode no person by thus occupying the whole hearth) and meditate, "aye, even to madness," on the blessings, the comforts, the heart-soothing interests I might have enjoyed, and which I disdained when within my reach. If I return to my solitary home earlier than usual, my servant is out, poor dog, to seek society like his master; for the domestick hum of a kitchen belongs not to my lonely dwelling, which in fact is nothing more than a lodging house; it is now too late to pay a second visit, the key is in the servant's pocket, and there is nothing left for me but to wander up and down the pavement till he returns to let me in. If I stay out beyond the usual hour, I find the poor fellow stretched along the hearth, before a few dying embers, snoring away the time of my absence, for want of a companion to beguile the heavy hours with "goblin tale or merry jest." Cheerless and comfortless, I go shivering to bed, with icy feet and aching head; and now imagination contrasts what I am, with what I should have been. My home a little commonwealth, devoted to its head; obedience to my laws resulting from affection; my little representatives climbing round my knees, "the envied kiss to share," a lovely smiling wife and cheerful fire-side—should my head ache, her soft hands would press with tenderness my temples, and sooth the pain; her lovely bosom would be my pillow, and anxious affection watch my slumbers. OH FOOL, FOOL! all these blessings were before me, but forsooth, I mounted *Vanity*, and rode over them all.

I was introduced to society with many advantages; my person and face, were both called handsome; an uncommon share of vivacity and good humour rendered me a great favourite with the ladies; my company was very much sought; I soon discovered my consequence, and was determined to increase it by every possible means. I was invited to all fashionable parties, and the ladies, sweet creatures, would declare it was quite stupid until I made any appearance; they vowed the beaux in general were the most inattentive animals in the creation; instead of chatting with them, they would form themselves into a knot in one corner of the room, discussing the effects of war or peace on the price of coffee, sugar, flour, tobacco, &c.

&c. as if the rude wretches had not sufficient time throughout the day to transact business. I always made it a point to make my entree pretty late, offering a thousand apologies with the greatest rapidity, to the lady of the house, for not being in time to take tea with her; I assured her I was previously engaged, but could not deny myself the felicity of spending a part of the evening with her and her charming circle:—then darting to that part of the room where the young ladies were gathered, a half dozen fair hands would be instantly held out, with, "Bless me, Mr. *Love-all*, where have you kept yourself all this time?"—after complimenting them on their charming looks, I would occasionally whisper in the ear of each, that nothing could have induced me to quit the delightful circle I had just left, but the irresistible attraction of the brightest eyes in the world, and the superiour charms I was then viewing. I declared it was with the greatest difficulty I could get off, and was apprehensive I had given offence by so doing; but what was all the world, when put in competition with *her* society, or a heavenly smile from *her* ruby lips. Thus each believed herself the magnet, and each strove to excel the other in playing off coquettish airs, and fascinating smiles; every smile acted as a spur to *Vanity*, and in this way I rode on triumphant, 'till *Disappointment*, *Age*, and *Disgust*, showed themselves in battle array;—the ungrateful beast did not long contend, his deceitful groom sneaked off as soon as he discovered this inveterate clan. Judge of my mortification, when looking timidly around, I saw *Vanity* was leaving me, and *Flattery* was quite out of sight. *Disappointment* took me by the hand, and we walked sullenly on together, frequently this tormenting fiend would stretch her hideous foot directly across my path; vexed to the heart, I would anxiously look round for assistance; but the first objects that met my eye, were *Neglect* and *Indifference*. At length a venerable figure slowly advanced, who, upon a nearer view I discovered to be one of the three that had so terrified me when *Vanity* threw me; her name was *Age*, and the nearer she approached, the more I became reconciled to her; I was pleased to observe she had a companion; as soon as we met, she informed me, it was at my option to retain as an attendant the person beside her; this offer greatly delighted me; his countenance beamed with an indefinite expression, that inspired me at once with self-esteem, my bosom glowed with some of the delightful sensations I felt, when mounted on *Vanity*. *Age* whispered me, to be very circumspect in my conduct to this august personage, for he is extremely tenacious, and if once offended so as to retire, no art or persuasion would



induce him to return. His name is *Respect*, and I have still the good fortune to keep this honourable attendant; but I am often obliged to sacrifice my passions in various ways to prevent his leaving me; for *Age*, whom I see every day, tells me if I part with *Respect*, his place will be instantly filled by *Neglect*, an abominable wretch, whose very name chills my blood.

I have been induced to use a metaphorical description of vanity, to shew the more forcibly the danger of granting it an ascendancy over us. An unbounded indulgence must not be allowed to any passion; it is absolutely necessary to curb even the best of them; if we do not guide them, they will too surely drive us, and the consequences must be fatal. Vanity is, I verily believe, the most innocent, inasmuch as it involves none but the possessor; *envy*, *desire*, *fear*, *ambition*, &c. often carry in their train wide-spreading ruin. Vanity concerns not others; *self*, adored *self*, is its only object. A total suppression of vanity is by no means advisable, nor indeed do I think possible; a spark exists in every human bosom, but we must be watchful not to suffer it to kindle into a flame; while it only glows, it may be considered as the basis of self-esteem, which is certainly of the utmost importance to every person; it is a sacred barrier that excludes many vices. Should a wretch exist, so abject as to be debased in his own opinion, where would his enormities end? the secret wish inherent in all, to appear well to the world, may be called the seeds of vanity; the smiles of the world are to it, as the dew of heaven to the verdure of the fields; in proportion as it receives this nutritious aid will it grow, but the hand of discretion must be employed to prune it, else will it gain the ungovernable height I have described, and for which, poor *Flavia* and myself have so severely suffered.

AN OLD BACHELOR.

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Mr. Easy,

Man is a being so complicated and inconsistent, that at one time, he is elevated to the pinnacle of human perfectibility; and the next moment reduced to a level with the meanest of the brute creation. We now behold him climbing, with unabated ardour, the path that leads to virtue; he sinks, presently, either into listless apathy, or without consideration, is hurried, by the empire of his passions, to the miserable abodes of vice and destruction. At one moment we view him in a state of negative felicity, or diseased with political lethargy; and soon after we are amazed to behold him, without chart or compass, braving the conflicting elements, on the roaring billows of an overwhelming sea of politicks. We again find him ac-

tuated by the genial glow of benevolence, his mind dilated by the calorific influence of humanity, and his liberality unbounded as space; but suddenly the chilling frosts of avarice, condense and cramp the atmosphere of his soul; by which, pity, charity, and every other virtue, are forever refused admission into his bosom. If we recur to the historick page, how many instances shall we find of the greatest revolutions, which had been only in embryo, kindled into a flame by incidents, in themselves the most insignificant. There have been governments oppressive and cruel in the extreme, without meeting opposition or remonstrance from those, over whom they have been exercised, until some trifling circumstance is seized by a pretended patriot, who infuses his factious and disorganizing venom into the infatuated and ductile minds of his too credulous and ignorant countrymen. The rape of a woman was a sufficient stimulus to the Romans, instigated by the intrepid courage of Brutus, to demolish their monarchical system of government; upon the ruins of which they erected a despotism of a higher species, as it is evident, that two were more able to wield the rod of tyranny than one. When a people are disaffected to their rulers, the slightest incident tending to a change of government, will afford a pretext for resistance to authority, although they have groaned a long time under the most oppressive measures, without any secret or avowed hostility. Thus we have seen the Genevese live peaceably under the form of government imposed upon them in the year 1782, by the united forces of France, Berne, and Sardinia, till the year 1789, when by the publication of an edict to enhance the price of bread, the embers of insurrection were stirred up, and kindled to a flame, which afterwards spread with electric velocity, through Swisserland and all Europe. The discovery of the figure of a cross, stained with blood, in the heart of a potatoe, and the perfect resemblance which its flower had to the tricoloured cockade of liberty, was a sufficient cause to the inhabitants of the Pays de Vaud to declare their rights, and overturn the tyrannical government of Berne. The introduction of tobacco, by Peter the Great, into Russia, and a few other slight innovations in their manners, gave rise to frequent insurrections, when real oppression was everlooked. Such inconsistencies proceed from prejudice, which has been an inexhaustible source of human infelicity. To support this proposition, many examples might be adduced from the history of past ages; and by a minute investigation, we should discover the dominion of prejudice to be as flourishing in the civilized as in the savage world. Thus, some christians are averse to undertakings on a Friday;

the Kamtschatkains will not assist a fellow creature when his life is in danger ; because they have been taught to believe, they ought not, in any thing, to oppose destiny.

February 24th.

JUVENIS.

Juvenis has assumed a very proper title, and has established his claim to it, by the exercise of his memory and fancy, with little appearance of judgment, and no deductions of reason. It is, to be sure, all very true, that we are inconsistent beings, that we are right and wrong by fits and starts, that there is much prejudice in the world, and that important events are frequently brought about by causes apparently inadequate and accidental : but what are we to infer from all this ? *Juvenis* does not say.

This remark is not made to discourage the attempts of one who would write well, if he did but give himself the trouble to think ; it is only intended to shew him that when a man sits down to write, he should propose to himself some aim, and keep some useful end in view ; that he should draw some rational conclusion from the statements he thinks necessary to make, and prove he means something more than to tantalize us with barren propositions.

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*Qui capit ille facit.*

Mr. Easy,

Churches are erected in honour of the Deity, and the worship performed in them is of the most solemn kind : when, therefore, we enter a church, sentiments correspondent with the awful majesty of the place, should be impressed upon our minds. Even should a person of deistical tenets visit them, though he despise the form of their ceremonies, and scoff at the doctrines that are taught within their walls, still the idea of its being dedicated to the Great Supreme, the Creator of the universe, should inspire him with respect for the sanctuary, and enforce a *decorous* behaviour.

How different is the case with some giddy youth of both sexes, who are in the habit of frequenting those places of publick worship. I have observed them during divine service : one makes wry faces, the others laugh ; then a topic of conversation is entered upon, and in chatting, giggling, and ogling, they spend their time, frequently to the great annoyance of their neighbours. Were a Chinese to be in church at such times, he would really suppose the wry-face-maker, when in the act of grimace, to be a *baboon*, and the rest of the group a parcel of thoughtless children, enjoying themselves with his antick capers.

It is a galling reflection that young men and women, grown up to the years of maturity, behave themselves so

unbecomingly, not to say indecently. Whether it is owing to ignorance, or impudence, or perhaps a combination of both, I cannot certainly tell, but think the cause is to be referred to *this* source.

I would advise them in future, either not to visit a church at all, or while they are there, to conduct themselves according to the principles of propriety and decorum.

NEMO.

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CHARACTER OF SHERIDAN'S ORATORY, BY DR. PARR.

Each of the three characters, of whom I have made frequent mention, is accomplished in his own way nearly to perfection ; but not one of them possesses a recommendation which is common to them all—I had almost said that Sheridan has attained whatever individually distinguishes them, and supplied what they respectively want of perfection. The golden tide of eloquence which Burke pours forth ; the urbanity, the easy and unstudied elegance of North ; the subtilty, the vigour, the variety of Fox—all these qualities are conspicuously united in Sheridan.

In the late publick cause instituted against a certain Governor, how extensive were his claims to favour and to fame ! With what energy of voice and spirit did he attach the attention of his hearers, of all ranks, ages, and parties ! In how wonderful a manner did he communicate delight, and incline the most reluctant spirits to his purpose !

To the discussion of this cause he came admirably prepared—all was anxious expectation and attention. From the very beginning he appeared to justify impatience. That subject, so various, complicated, and abstruse, he comprehended with precision, and explained with systematick acuteness. He placed every argument in that particular point where it had the greatest energy and effect. Throughout a very long speech he was careful to use no imprudent expression, but was manifestly and uniformly consistent with himself ; his style was dexterously adapted to the contingency of the occasion : in one part he was copious and splendid ; in another, more concise and pointed, and gave additional polish to truth. As he found it necessary, he instructed, delighted, or agitated his hearers. He appeared to have no other object in view but that of giving the fairest termination to the business ; to prove the guilt of the accused by the most indisputable evidence ; and to confirm the object of the investigation by strong and decisive reasoning.

At that time Sheridan discovered a spirit of wit and humour, not mean and vulgar, but consistent with the purest eloquence. His oratory was often rapid and diffused, but in no one instance crowded or redundant ; it was, as

contingence required, vehement, indignant, and expressive of the justest sorrow: its impression, its splendour, its copiousness, and variety, were in all respects responsible to the greatness and dignity of the occasion.

With how great applause he was heard by an attentive senate, is universally known. His most determined adversaries were compelled to render tribute to his excellence. A large portion was added, not merely to his ingenuous and honourable popularity, but to his solid and unfading glory. Posterity will again and again, with renewed delight and wonder, peruse that composition; and, with heartfelt animation, will often apply to him the words of *Æschines*, 'Oh that we had heard him!'

FROM THE REPERTORY.

THE CARAVANSARY.

Criticism has been generally supposed to require more taste and judgment, than most branches of literature, and to be correct, only when founded on the deep knowledge and elaborate examination of the politest authors both ancient and modern. But so lavish, in her prodigality, has Nature been to the distinguished inhabitants of this enlightened country, that they are criticks from the very cradle, by the mere force of native genius, without the assistance of learning. Nor is this happy gift of criticism confined to individuals of education, but pervades all classes of the community; so that a blacksmith will decide upon an oration, a carpenter upon a poem, and a hackney-coachman on a moral or political essay.

Foreigners are struck with astonishment at this apparent universality of knowledge, which is greatly increased, when they are informed that these able criticks can barely read and write.

In other countries, no man gives an opinion on subjects, which he has not considered, and which he does not in some measure understand. But here such is the natural superiority of genius, emboldened by the freedom of our government, that no previous knowledge is necessary to enable us to decide peremptorily on the merits either of a man or of an author. Any claim to superiority in the art of criticism, by individuals, would be resented as aristocratical usurpation, and inconsistent with the sacred rights of liberty and equality.

Without questioning, then, this distinguished prerogative of the *only free nation on earth*, or reflecting, in the smallest degree, on the *good sense of the people*, of which our honest friends so continually and laudably remind us, I shall merely claim the same privilege with my

fellow-citizens, and remark on some criticks of my acquaintance.

Garrulus is a critick, universally given to admiration. Whatever issues from the press, is sure of meeting with his warmest applause, and the last production he always considers the best. Swift observes, that wherever he sees a note of admiration, he always skips that passage, as containing nothing to the purpose. Garrulus, on the other hand, will dwell with rapture on an oh! and be thrown into extasies at an ah! He will point out as beauties, passages most distinguished for their fustian and bombast, and quote the feeblest and most trite, as specimens of ease and simplicity.

As a writer, Garrulus is turgid and sesquipedalian, more attentive to the rounding of a period, than to the justness of a sentiment. He searches assiduously for the hardest words he can find, and tortures his faculties to discover phraseology, as remote as possible from common use. Sometimes he will attempt a piece in imitation of the *Spectator*, and in his pursuit of ease and elegance, will degenerate into meanness and vulgarity. But the absurdities of Garrulus rather amuse than offend; and we pardon his loquacity, in consideration of the goodness of his disposition.

Curio is a critick of a very different turn of mind. He has consumed his whole life in search of faults, and prides himself in his skill and readiness in detecting them. But though his critical cobweb is too slight to hold a common-sized fly, you will be astonished at the number and smallness of the insects which he entangles in it. In criticising a poem, he pays no attention to the regularity of the plan, the spirit of the composition, or the harmony of the numbers. But his critical microscope will be employed in hunting for an inaccurate rhyme, or some similar trifle, which, in his judgment, is sufficient to condemn the whole poem. If he undertakes the examination of prose, he confines his attention to particles and monosyllables. The misapplication of an *a* for a *the*, excites his utmost indignation, and will induce him to abuse the author, for a blockhead, and a murderer of English and grammar.

Without genius to write a paragraph himself, he will ostentatiously boast of his numberless corrections and improvements on the language of the best authors. In a word, Curio is a contemptible pedant, a mere verbal critick of the lowest order, with a head and heart equally contracted, a mere word-catcher, who lives on syllables, whose utmost knowledge extends to the pointing of a comma, or the placing of a semicolon.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

LINES

Written in the Spring of 1800.

Lovely, gay, delightful season!
Once again we hail thy bloom;
Frost departs, and surly winter
Quits the plains to give thee room.

Rich in beauty, sweet in fragrance,
All creation smiles around;
Blushing gardens own thy presence,
Living verdure decks the ground.

Dark, tempestuous days no longer
Fright the warblers of the grove;
Vernal winds each vale caressing,
Wake them to the song of love.—

Ev'ry heart beats gay and cheery,
Lightly trips the youthful throng;
While a sweetly rising echo
Tells the village maiden's song.

Pleasure ev'ry bosom filling,
Care and pain fly far away;
Love, in one delightful measure,
Sweetly crowns the vernal day.

CLARA.

WRITTEN IN 1802, DURING SICKNESS.

TO BACHELORS.

Tell me, who scorn hymenial ties,
Who of your much lov'd freedom boast,
Where is that happiness you prize?
Or what's your recompense for pleasures lost?

Say, when by dire misfortune prest,
And fortune scowls upon your fate,
What then can ease your troubled breast?
Will friendship then participate?

When to the bed of sickness doom'd,
And fierce disease your life assails;—
Say, will your lot then be presum'd
Envied: because no fair one wails?

When time has silver'd o'er your locks,
And age decrepit liv'd out life,
Reason your choice then loudly mocks,
Asking the balmy comforts of a wife.

Or, when th' impetuous flow of health
Rolls through the blood its warmest fire,
Are not th' unsocial joys of wealth,
But phantom forms in rich attire?

Confess, then, that you long have stray'd,
Devious led by pleasure's glare;
True happiness you've long delay'd,
Own, 'tis deny'd without the fair.

FLETA.

BENIGNA.

"Blow on, ye loud winds, and ye rains fiercely pour,
"Less cruel are you than the youth I adore,
"Less fierce is your rage than his hate;
"For a few fleeting weeks to creation will bring
"Its former delights; and again on the spring
"Shall love and tranquility wait.

"But ah, thou sad bosom, so pregnant with woe,
"Nor comfort, nor pleasure again shalt thou know,
"All, all with false *Percival* flies;
"No more for *Benigna* shall nature look gay,
"No more shall the mild cheering aspect of May
"Bring gladness again to her eyes.

"Then welcome, kind Death! oh! how welcome to view!
"False *Percival*, cruel deceiver, adieu!
"Soon, soon shall the grave hide my woes"—
She ceas'd—wretched girl, thy complainings are o'er,
Friendly Death has releas'd thee, and sorrow no more
Shall trouble *Benigna's* repose. LEANDER.

TO DELIA.

Hope told a fond, a flatt'ring tale,
While rapt attention chain'd my list'ning ear;
I little thought her pictur'd scenes so frail,
Nor deem'd her promises so insincere.

"Till late, like giddy fortune flown away,
She left the dupe of her capricious wiles,
With fruitless sorrow to lament the day
When first he trusted her deceitful smiles.

Yet should she chaunt again her syren songs,
And *Delia's* angel form assume once more;
Not sad experience of my recent wrongs,
Nor prudent fear, nor reason, could restore.

My captive senses from her sweet controul—
Oh! if I once more own her magick sway;
Wilt thou speak comfort to my wounded soul,
And chase despair's dark-threat'ning clouds away? Z

LINES ADDRESSED TO MISS N. M. B.

Accompanying a pack of Visiting cards.

Tho' fickle fashion, various as the clime,
And still more varied by revolving time;
Contemns all laws, and reason boldly spurns,
And e'en while changing still for change she burns:
Yet to her sanction'd follies we must bend,
Or 'gainst the sense of all mankind offend:
Thus to her wanton caprice we must yield,
And thus to tyrant custom leave the field;
But is there *one* who does not deem it hard
That sweet M...a visits with a card. EUGENIUS.

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